

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
RARE BIRD RECORDS
AUGUST - NOVEMBER 2003

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period August 1 - November 30. I've compiled only those observations for species which are listed as **Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?fall" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the fall season.

This autumn season was graced with abundant rainfall, particularly during the month of October, when heavy storms filled arroyos and brought the Rio Grande roaring through the canyons. The rapid rise of the river necessitated the evacuation of both Rio Grande Village and Cottonwood Campgrounds, flooded the Santa Elena Canyon Road, and provided those lucky enough to be here with excellent rafting opportunities, an activity that has been sadly lacking over the past few years of extreme low water conditions. The Chisos Basin received almost six inches during October, prompting a press release from the park calling attention to the fact that, for the first time in eleven years, rainfall totals in the Chisos Basin had surpassed twenty inches.

A comparison of current year to date precipitation with ytd totals through November 2002 (+ or -) documents the uncharacteristically wet Fall season. Panther Junction; 15.98" (+2.30"), Chisos Basin; 24.37" (+8.54"), Rio Grande Village; 8.81"(-0.02"), and Castolon; 9.16" (+1.05").

Temperatures through the season were typically hot during August and September, with a general cooling trend beginning in October. No true cold fronts have made it this far south yet, though nighttime temperatures at Rio Grande Village have dipped into the twenties on a few occasions.

Lingering summer season birds provided the highlights of August, particularly a pair of **white-eared hummingbirds** that were faithful to the Boot Canyon campsites, and several **painted redstarts** that wandered all along the Boot Canyon drainage. Joining the above birds in August were a female broad-billed hummingbird, at least two **red-faced warblers**, and a small showing of hermit warblers. Two independent reports of a **mountain chickadee** were intriguing, given the hypothetical status of this species in the park. A known resident on the Davis and Guadalupe Mountains, mountain chickadees are absent from Big Bend, but there are at least two undocumented records for the summer in the Chisos Mountains, both from the 1970s.

Besides the broad-billed and white-eared hummingbirds, other species were well represented in the park during the season, encouraged by the flush of wildflower blooms in the wake of the good rainfalls. Lucifer and Rufous hummingbirds lingered late and one immature Anna's arrived very early to a feeder on 9/26. A report of a **berylline** near the top of the Pinnacles trail on 9/14 was very interesting and is currently under review by the TBRC. There is only one record of this species for the park (8/18/91).

Park Wildlife Tech Missy Powell, on her patrols of the North Rosillos/Hart Ranch area of the park for feral hogs, found a surprising "cluster" of burrowing owls in mid-August, and again in mid-October. Now rare in the park (one pair documented nesting in 2001) this unexpected find suggests that this little owl may be holding on in this little-visited area of the park.

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
American White Pelican	4	11/28	RGV-Nature Trail	Jim Black	acc.
	4	11/29	Lajitas	Laird Considine	acc.
Gray hawk	2	10/05	Cottonwood Camp.	B&S. Bourbon	rare
	1	11/24	Cottonwood Camp.	Eric Carpenter	rare
Common Black-hawk	1	10/11	Santa Elena Cyn	Richard Palmer	rare
Virginia rail	1	9/05	Tank 86	Missy Powell	rare
Eurasian Collared Dove	1	11/10	Persimmon Gap	Ben Velner	?fall
Flammulated owl	2	8/09	Boot Canyon	Tim Fennell	rare
	1	8/24	Boot Springs	Ruth Games	rare
Burrowing owl	6	8/21	Hog Tank	Missy Powell	rare
	2	8/21	Burrowing Owl Tank	M. Powell	rare
	1	9/05	9 Point Draw	Missy Powell	rare
	6	10/15	N. Rosillos Road	Missy Powell	rare
Broad-billed Hummingbird	1f	8/12	Boot Canyon 2	Petra Hockey	?fall
White-eared Hummingbird*	2m,f	8/01	Boot canyon 3	Eric Carpenter	?fall
	2m,f	8/8-9	Boot Canyon 4	Eric Carpenter	?fall
	2m,f	8/20	Boot Canyon 3	Kym Beckwith	?fall
	1m	8/23	Boot Canyon 2	Lynn Barber	?fall
	1m	8/31	Boot Canyon 4	Jason Leifester	?fall
*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Accepted 10/14/03					
Berylline Hummingbird	1*	9/14	Pinnacles Trail	Grant Gurley	?fall
*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Not Accepted 12/15/03					
Magnificent Hummingbird	1m	8/16	Pinnacles Pass	Mark Flippo	unc.
Lucifer Hummingbird	2m,f	10/22	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	late

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Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1m	8/19-31	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	10/30	Panther Junction	Rob Dean	rare
Anna's Hummingbird	1im	9/26	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
	1im	11/18-30	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
Calliope Hummingbird	1f	8/20	Boot Canyon	Kym Beckwith	rare
	1f	8/23	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
	1f	8/24	Pinnacles Trail	David Elkowitz	rare
Rufous Hummingbird	1f	10/30-31	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	late
	1f	11/21	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	late
	1f	11/25	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Eric Carpenter	late
Eastern Wood-pewee	1	9/07	RGV-Campground	Mark Flippo	?fall
Red-eyed vireo	1	9/26	Pinnacles Trail	Bill Carlson	rare
Mountain Chickadee	1*	8/15	Boot Canyon	Tom & Elyse Fuller	hyp.
	1*	8/31	Laguna Meadows	K.Sheridan Coffey	hyp.
*Hypothetical on park list - see notes.					
Brown creeper	1	11/21	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	11/25	RGV-Group camp	Eric Carpenter	spo.
Carolina wren	1	9/07	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	9/27	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	11/21	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	11/25	RGV-RV park	Eric Carpenter	rare
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	11/17	Window Trail	Tim Downey	spo.
Black-throated Green warbler	1f	8/09	Boot Canyon 4	Tim Fennel	rare

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Hermit warbler	2	8/23	Boot Canyon	Ruth Games	rare
	1f	8/31	Colima Trail	Jason Leifester	rare
	1	8/31	Laguna Mdw. Tr.	Rick Schaefer	rare
	1	9/26	Colima Trail	Rob Braufield	rare
Northern Waterthrush	1	9/02	Boot Canyon	Jason Leifester	rare
Louisiana Waterthrush	1	8/09	Boot Canyon	E.Carpenter T.Fennell M.Lockwood	acc.
Red-faced warbler	1*	8/06	Boot Canyon	Missy Powell Alison Freeman	spo.
	1*	8/09	Boot Canyon	Eric Carpenter Tim Fennell	spo.
	2*	8/12	Boot Canyon	Petra Hockey	spo.
	1*	8/14	Boot Canyon 2	Gloria Saylor	spo.
	1*	8/25	Boot Springs	Ruth Games	spo.
*Review Species: Report to TBRC:Lockwood Accepted 10/14/03					
Painted redstart	2	8/01	Boot Canyon 2	Eric Carpenter	spo.
	1	8/06	Boot Canyon	Powell,Freeman	spo.
	4	8/09	Boot Canyon 4	Carpenter,Fennell	spo.
	2	8/16	Boot Springs	Mark Flippo	spo.
	1	8/17	Boot Canyon	Gloria Saylor	spo.
	1	8/20	Boot Canyon	Kym Beckwith	spo.
	1	8/31	Boot Canyon 2-3	Jason Leifester	spo.
Indigo bunting	1f	9/16	N. Rosillos	Missy Powell	rare